The CURRENCY of the INVISIBLE

SILAS EVANS

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The Currency of the Invisible

A Spiritual Interpretation of Stewardship

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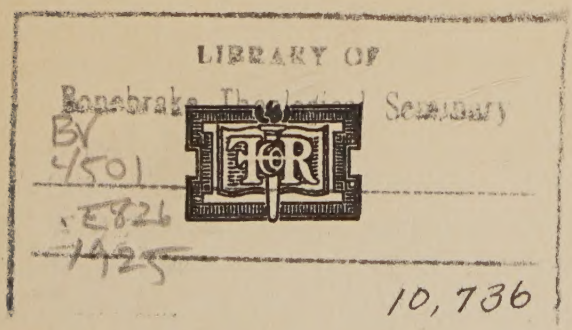

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Introduction

THE true prophet is first a seer. Only as he looks through the outward seeming of things visible, into the realities that lie beyond them can he interpret life aright. It is this penetrating insight of the seer that the author of this book possesses in no ordinary degree. His is a message peculiarly adapted to leaders, and the book in which he presents it will prove a useful tool in the hands, especially, of ministers of the Gospel and those preparing for the ministry.

The course laid out in the pages that follow is not designed for beginners, but adapted rather to more advanced students. It was called forth by a challenge I ventured to make Dr. Evans after hearing him give a series of addresses to a picked group of church leaders. In response, he proposed to bring out, "like the fugue in music," the idea, that the things that are seen—money, movements, schemes, programs, organizations in general—are validated, conserved and probably pooled as they relate to the great unseen realities; and by a sort of reverse spiritual logic, these more temporal

things get their eternal meanings as they are used for the currency of the invisible. And this is what Dr. Evans has done in these chapters. Those who enter their portals will find that which will stimulate their minds to make excursions in those wider fields of Stewardship study which Jesus opened when here among men.

DAVID MCCONAUGHY.

New York.

Preface

THIS book is offered because of many earnest inquiries from those who have wanted the writer to help in shaping their lives in a practical way in reference to the unseen. Where there is no vision, the people get pharisaic. Vital personality is everywhere chafing against the bondage of apparatus. Organized activity without meaning is blind. There is, everywhere, a deep desire to know that eternal life which draws its strength from the imponderable elements which one sees in the charm of Jesus.

Man is crushed by the machine of his hands. The throb of vast material interests, he knows, is not the pulse of reality. Idolatry is essentially the worship of the machine. If civilization is to be enriched, man in his divine worth must be lord also of the machine. It is as we seek first, the soul's freedom in the truth of the great unseen, that the human welfare in the goods of a bountiful earth will be safely and abundantly added unto us.

The man of mechanical efficiency only is superficial,—slavishly contemporary, reads newspapers, sees no eternal meaning in the flow of events; believes that the things which are seen are real, and things that are unseen are vague and empty. To him a house not made with hands is stuff from which dreams are made. To prepare for death

means only to make a sound will (assuming that this is a sound possibility). He is too busy subduing earth to give a passing thought about winning heaven. The patience of unanswered prayer must yield to "pep" which gets things done. A dream must be capitalized; a vision calculated. He points with pride to big buildings, paved streets, good roads, sky scrapers, quantity producing factories, big bank clearings, and views with pitiful complacency and passing tolerance the spiritual life and the great imponderables. Oh, how loves he his business! It is his meditation all the day.

But a normal man does not enjoy being spiritually anæmic. This book is written for the man who wants an office-hour with his soul; to the modern man who needs to refresh himself in the midst of the machine by reasserting the revolutionary innerness of Jesus; to anyone who should be resolutely refusing to bow down his spirit to idolatrous worship of the things which his hands have made.

All our real problems are at the center, and here the gospel always plays its spotlight. The surface of the machine will not get smaller or slower, but the soul must get more spiritual.

Essentially, this book is not placing a sharp antithesis between man and his machine, but suggests an exegesis of God and truth unseen in the currency of the vast seen.

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I

THE SPIRITUAL EXCHANGE

THE Apostle Paul gives us a penetrating insight into values in one of his bold statements of contrast: "The things which are seen," he says, "are temporal, the things which are not seen are eternal." Here are two levels of reality. The seen is relatively real, the unseen is absolutely real. This proposition makes a good sub-title to the Bible; a good sub-title to the world of things and persons. The reality of the unseen is a basal conviction of Christian faith which expresses in beautiful simplicity, that there is a reality back of appearance; law back of fact; eternal meaning underneath the flow of events in time; that things become real just in proportion as they are removed from the seen and the handled.

That the world is a spiritual system is obvious, but it is spiritually obvious—that is, obvious to the spiritual mind. The worship of mud gods too often blinds the eyes of the sense perceiving, shutting the light of spiritual truth from shining upon them.

It is sometimes said that the ascendency of things material, characterizes the present age.

We do not believe it. Our answer to any partial science or philosophy which now and then, even in halls of learning, suggests that what is beyond our sense of experience is purely speculative and is therefore negligible, is this assurance of the unseen. The firm foundations of God standeth with the imprimatur of this seal, that the Lord knoweth that which is His. There is knowledge in the Most High which we, His creatures, are feeling after and feebly finding, in the things which He is making and the persons whom He is ruling and blessing.

Life is change. It seems a continuous traffic in the things that are coming and going, a trading in things perishable. No sooner are we through establishing an equation between what we had and what we now have than we begin an exchange in something of what we have for what we want and hope to have.

Life is exchange, the Christian will prefer to say. And certainly in the exchange we never make a mathematical equation. The two terms are not equal. We place values, spiritual values, into the reckoning. If our standards are those of Christ, we will not want to buy " that which profiteth not." Rather we will barter the lower for the higher. We will lose, give away from our selfish grasp the life inferior and passing, to gain for our deeper self the life superior and eternal. Christianity is a system of living, a divine alchemy, which transmutes the baser metals into the finer spiritual

values. It is a reasonable, because spiritual, service to present the body with its fruits and labors unto God in any way which is clearly acceptable. By the same law of the spiritual exchange, it is the road to spiritual bankruptcy to deal in futures which belong only to the perishable things of time. Such is a losing life-game.

Spiritual values are often won through the currency of " the things which are seen." Whenever property or service—very often symbolized as money—is wisely exchanged in a way that promotes the deeper life, there is a vast increment in the second or the higher term of the equation. God's relation to men is one of grace, or unmerited favor. It is not an eye for an eye. It is not morals by the micrometer. It is not justice measured by the pound of flesh. It is not a forgiveness to the extent of four hundred and ninety times, the seventy times seven of Christ's playful rebuke to Peter.

To the Christian, property values are not to be conformed to an equation in time, but are to be transformed by their uses into spiritual values. Lucre becomes luster to the renewed mind in Christ. Even where sin abounds, *there* (exactly where sin is) grace shall much more abound. " Though your sins be as scarlet, *they* (that is, the sins) shall be as white as snow." " He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities." It is not " God's plan " to measure

or to mechanically standardize the gifts of the Spirit. The tithing of petty " mint " or of larger money savors not of the genius of God, but rather of the schemes of man. The " silent partner " is a creator of values. He is not a majestic bookkeeper; He is Lord of all. And in so far as our all is placed in relation to His sovereign right and ownership, He is transformer and enricher. Things are made for man, not man for things. The divine Presence stands over against the treasury with a promise of commendation in spiritual life and reward for every gift that is brought to the altar in His name. And now and then He may say in a specific case, Sell all that thou hast to gain that life which is eternal.

The right use of changes in the temporal order is to make a proper exchange with reference to the spiritual order. A fair exchange is no robbery. A Christian exchange is always a great gain. Christian living is a delicate and automatic system of spiritual bookkeeping. It is a poor bargain to barter the soul for silver, to sell one's heritage for a mess of pottage, to have one's barn full and the soul empty, when it is required to check in for a report. When life accounts are balanced, the ledger of moral values should not show poverty. Here is the big question of Jesus: " What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? " Let us say, not as a whine, but as a transcendent faith, " Take the world, but give me Jesus."

What is life's equation? Earthly loss may be heavenly gain. What compensation,—moral, spiritual, and eternal—are we demanding for our material losses? Count it not loss, even though the outward man perish, if the inner man is being renewed day by day. This change is a proper exchange. There were times during the War when we felt that the spiritual ledger balances were more normal than during many of our normal periods of history, for the moral values in the exchange were more permanent. I mean this—that dinners, dances, wines, cigars, luxuries, jewelry, fine houses were exchanged for Red Cross, Government bonds, community drives, missionary movements, welfare programs. Life itself was enriched, when so many things were placed on the altar of ideals. What is real normalcy? We hear a man sometimes speak with pride about "my car," "my yacht," "my bank account," "my summer home." The great life lived with God—in the future there will be more of them—will speak about "my missionary," "my church," "my student in college." Many a Christian man could maintain a missionary on the proceeds of his superfluous automobile expense, and what a great bargain this would be with life! If he made this exchange it would restore a proper balance nearer to the mind of Christ. In some such an exchange all his lower values would be pitched to a higher plane of economic, social and spiritual life. What we spend and buy and use

determines the order of society. Fashions place thousands at work on the passing objects which they require. The more abiding objects would shift the whole social order to a higher and richer plane. A saving and a spending in the interests of the larger life of the world would serve to make the things seen a larger means of saving grace.

St. Paul places this on his life ledger, "What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ,"—that is, in the interests of Christ,—"Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ."

It is not a pious fiction, but too often a sad and defeating fact, that earthly gain is heavenly loss. We should hear again and again this penetrating wisdom of Jesus—Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth in interests which are transient, where the moth and the rust and the thief and the more modern corroding and destructive agencies of time will destroy, without the commensurate gain to the abiding life. Know well that Christ is not interested here or essentially anywhere in the merely economic, nor does He speak from the lower platforms of social theory. Clearly and definitely, here and everywhere, in His own day in Israel and in His every day in the world, Jesus comments on the passing economic and social, with reference to the abiding spiritual

Kingdom. Therefore, says the Lifegiver, lay up treasures for yourself in a manner that secures those heavenly values which is life that is eternal, where the wear and tear of circumstances will not destroy, but will build an abiding character in the individual soul and a social order. Such is a sound investment in the spiritual exchange.

II

THE UNSEEN IN CURRENCY OF THE MATERIAL WORLD

THE world that is reported by our senses is called material. Is it not currency of the unseen? This world is a medium of exchange from the thought of God to the thought of man. It is temporal and its reality rests back in the eternal order. Can we make this clearer to those whose eyes are riveted on things seen? We suggest it by way of illustration.

Beneath my feet there is now a rolling planet. I am here, a tiny material speck that frets the earth's surface for a while, and then am known no more. But pause to reflect. There is an unseen person connected with this body which is seen, (for you have never seen me, and I have never seen you. We see only one another's bodies.) This person influences this organized speck, and the furrows worn on the brow bespeak a more real power than all the forces which carve out the ocean basin, the river courses and the mountain ridges. Unless, perchance, we see in these also that power unseen back of this body called the Universe. The greatest thing in the Universe

of God is man, and the uniqueness of man is personality.

This speck is under the influence of an unseen personality, and as for this larger mass called earth, it will be found inferior to the smaller mass called my body, if there is no power unseen influencing its movements. But let us consider. I easily state some unseen factors, about this planet which bulks so large about me. My sense says it does not move, my reason asserts that it does move. I see it to be flat, and I assert that it is round. I note that the sun moves, but I assert that the earth moves. " Seeing is believing " does not apply here without some criticism. A stubborn school board, not long ago, had every weight of common sense experience in its favor, in dismissing a teacher who taught that the earth moves and that the earth is round and other things that were contrary to their sense observation. This, of course, is but the primer in the pathway to the unseen. Every step into science and philosophy is away from the stuff supposedly so real, so genuinely concrete, into the absolutely real and unseen. Thus the spiritual is not sentiment or fancy; it is solid fact. Science is quite clear, in that what we call matter is the least substantial thing in the universe. The material world must have its ticketed data validated in human reason. And there is chaos in our understanding, so partial and limited, until human reason finds justification of its faith in a reasonable

world as validated in a God of reason. The scientist takes the world and makes it closer to reason's demand. Rightly understood, it was not irreverent for the old sage to say of the Ptolomaic theory in astronomy, that if God would take him into His confidence, he would give God some pointers in making the world. May we not devoutly say that all real science is God in eternal reason taking somebody into His confidence, in interpreting the universe.

Here is the bread that we eat. Surely it is visible. There it is upon the table. We ask a blessing over it. We thank God for it. And what has God the Unseen to do with this bread that we see? Either this is stupendous folly or stupendous faith. It is faith, sustained in fact. We are taught to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Where is the unseen hand that gives this seen thing? Oh, stubborn and slow of heart, to believe all that science has written. Listen! Go to the baker. Ask him where he gets this bread. He will direct you to the miller, from whom he receives his flour. The miller will refer you to the farmer. The farmer takes you out to his fields of waving grain and says, "Look! That is where my wheat is made. My hired man plants; clouds of heaven or the irrigation ditches, water; but the Lord giveth the increase." The Christian farmer will further say, "I am trustee for this piece of ground. The eminent domain belongs to the state.

The absolute domain is God's, whose are the plains and their products, the thousand hills and the fruits thereof."

You notice that this field is fenced. A fence! That is eloquent witness to the reality of the unseen. I had a friend who invested his all in land in Cuba. He held it before and after the United States took a just and benevolent concern for this little neighbor which had fallen among thieves. He learned in a very definite experience that not alone does fine and productive land make value; but there must be just government and free citizenship, which unseen spiritual factors are very essential factors in real estate value. Fences are a tribute to Christian civilization and are meaningless in barbarism. Except for cattle, the fence is meaningless in a civilized country, but for a different reason. The real fence-line is immaterial and secured by a Government which has a record of the same. This fence preaches the unseen doctrines of rights and liberties. My freedom—prescribed by government—is for use up to the fence. Over the fence I trespass upon my neighbor's rights. What, then, is the deeper meaning of a fence? It speaks for the Government's grant of ownership and assurance of rights and freedom. But what man of you hath seen these things at any time, or can see them? Yet the realest and dearest possessions of the human race are under such captions as "Freedom!" and "Rights!" Things

that are seen have always been laid upon the altar to redeem these unseen realities. The United States went into voluntary conscription of its lives and property, for the great intangibles of liberty, to man and public rights, to nations large and small. We laid down billions of those relatively unreal and trivial things sometimes called "almighty dollars," refuting the cynicism of the devil; "What shall a man give in exchange for his life?" Property and life have always been, and always will be, offered to Almighty God for things unseen, worth while and of eternal significance. For we live not by dollars alone, but, by every grace of life for which dollars may serve as means.

Now I go into this field and pluck the grain. I prefer to do it on the Sabbath Day, for I have a sacred job. No Jewish Sabbath observance prejudice will keep me from my sacred task. Following the way of Christ's disciples, I thresh the grain in my hand. I take a kernel home with me, and then I consult a commentary. There are so many commentaries, not so labeled, which throw light on the book of Life and the world of things,—biology, astronomy, agriculture, chemistry. The Bible itself throws a flood of light on many of its commentaries. Is not life in all its varied interests a running commentary interpreting God and His ways? This commentary is a book that I have in my library, *The Story of a Grain of Wheat.* Learned things are said about a grain of wheat, but

I speak after the manner of men and not after the manner of scientists now. I find that there is a little rootlet tucked away, a little leaflet folded up ready to open out if the grain should be let fall into the earth, and then there is a little bag of wheat attached, which will go to build up the new plant at the beginning of its life. This provision is no more a real part of the grain than is what I eat a part of me. This is the bag of food which we take to make our flour for our bread.

But we have not seen the real thing yet. And that for the simple reason that the real thing cannot be seen. The real of that grain of wheat is not leaf nor root, nor mass of food. It is life. Nor will microscope or chemical tests aid you. You may see its envelope and shell, but no man hath seen life at any time, nor can he. If life is present, that grain may be preserved in a mummy in Egypt for hundreds of years and, when planted properly, it will bring forth abundantly. If life is absent, we may as well sow diamonds, with a view to growing a crop of diamonds, (intrinsically less valuable stuff than wheat). I offer my prayer again to an unseen God for an unseen thing, " Give us this day our daily bread."

Let us consult Jesus directly about this grain of wheat. Jesus spoke of the Kingdom in terms of wheat and flowers and birds and things, rather than in dogmas and traditions, and mouth-filling words. From Him we learn a spiritual law in

terms of the natural world, and Jesus used this natural law to illustrate the spiritual world, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But, if it die, it bringeth forth abundantly." Again I get a great unseen life-lesson which is real. It is the richness of the sacrificial life; the loss of life to gain it. Whether it is a grain of wheat in its brown jacket on a Dakota field, or the American boys in khaki on the fields of France, or the glorious company of the heroes of the Cross who have given gifts of body and mind for a faith which is evidence of things not seen, there is the rising on stepping-stones of dead selves to the higher things of the life more abundant.

A bondage to things seen long blinded the eyes of those who made research in medicine. Here, for instance, is malaria—bad air, "mala aria." There were many stupid notions about night air, silly closing of windows at night; a certain place would be condemned because there was supposed to be gaseous miasma near swamps, due to bad air, or due to land configuration. But now we know that night air or air anywhere carries malaria only when it carries a certain kind of mosquito, and that mosquito carries a malarial germ. The germ-theory of medicine reasserts, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with unseen powers." America has made a great achievement which can be seen in the Panama Canal, because General Gorges

fought against unseen germs of scarlet fever and yellow fever, which in the past had made it impossible to live in the Panama region, whereas today it is as wholesome as any other region.

There is, today, no place for more solid spiritual comfort than the researches of physics. Strange and shadowy words have been used of late in the field of physical phenomena. At the California Institute of Technology, physicists are joining forces with other scientists to make, as it were, a joint attack on matter. They seem to be finding it the least substantial thing there is. Says Sir J. J. Thompson, "Matter is mostly made up of holes. The unpalpable ether—what we commonly call air —has a density equal to 2,000,000,000 times that of lead."

Put your watch under a bell-glass. You hear it tick. Pump out the air and it is inaudible. The unseen air is the medium. Our reason infers that; and reason, too, is unseen. But the air is a fact of the senses. It cannot be seen, but it can be felt and weighed and measured. Light an electric bulb. Put it under the exhausted bell-glass. It can be seen. It is open to the senses. What is the medium? Air? No. Is there a vacuum? No. Reason places something unseen there. Because of what we do see, we must infer this medium which will account for it; "a medium whereby heat, light, electricity, perhaps even thought itself, is transmitted from one point to another." We

call it ether. Who hath seen ether at any time? What credulity; for ether is so strange that we may say we wouldn't believe in it, if we saw it. In science they speak learnedly of this mysterious ether, infinitely more firm than steel and infinitely more pliable than rubber. No man hath seen a cause at any time. He only sees effects. This world is a great effect whose cause is God. We are left without excuse in natural religion, for we should have inferred God, says St. Paul, from the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead.

The world of science is dead without the faith of science. We come to the world believing that it is a reasonable system and that it is the rewarder of all who with scientific interest seek in the light of this faith. Science does not accept only what it proves. It really accepts in order to prove, and it proves in the light of what it accepts. No man has proved the world rational. He increasingly finds it so in the light of his faith that it is so. This is the scientific victory that overcometh the world; even the faith of the scientist in the whole world as reasonable. The scientist accepts the evidence of things not seen. The atom, the ether, are as baseless suppositions as ghosts. But science is superficial without them. They are assumptions unseen, justified as being explanations of phenomena seen.

If sense experience were sufficient, then we

would never resort to reason, and reason is never at rest until it rests in the eternal reason. It is a triumph of science, that matter is essentially force, and that force is unseen. Except for historic reasons the word matter might be dismissed from science. (Let me say clearly in passing that this gives no comfort to those who attempt to deny human experience in the denial of the experienced world of phenomena.) "Nature is spirit," said Principal Fairbairn, years ago to an Oxford audience. Someone privately asked if he used these words literally or rhetorically. He answered, "I never used any words more literally." Says Martineau, "Nature is God's mask, not His counterfeit." Says Carlyle, "All is natural and all is supernatural." In fact a real scientific age cannot be a materialistic age, for science cannot worship things, but ideals. A lecturer in the Royal Institute of Science recently said, "Nothing is more certain than that science will in its maturity affirm a spiritual cause for the universe." As we study the Bible and study science, we are forever hearing the scientist and the Psalmist today singing a beautiful duet with these themes: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork." "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein."

Has science enlarged and enriched the world so vastly; it has enlarged and enriched the soul more

vastly. The sands of the sea and the stars of the sky are the symbols of God, the Creator of all. Things are shot through and through with God, and deep appreciation of the imperishable real is the first essential to the right handling of the things which perish with the using. The miser regards the means rather than the ends; the money as an end to itself, rather than the things for which it is designed as media of exchange. The Godless mammon-worshiper beholds things in themselves as self-sufficient, rather than as the currency of the unseen and real. He has never beheld God in His Universe, high and lifted up above all the works of His hands. The heaven and the earth of things are the works of His fingers, but their meaning and interpretation direct us to the mind of the Most High.

This is God's world, and keeping in our thought His title clear, is a condition of our proper living on the premises. God is first, and the secondary which is like unto the first, are the heavens and the earth which declare His glory. In the light of the relation of God to His creation, Jesus strikes clearly this attitude of moral evaluation. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all *things* shall be added. No one can adequately and with spiritual value serve God with mammon until he sees clearly that mammon is in the real riches, and that no one can serve God *and* mammon. The earth is the Lord's, really and es-

sentially, the Lord's; and our use of the earth to retain or release any portion, must be fundamentally determined not by code or convention, but by a stewardship of all. That man who lays him a real hold on the eternal will command more adequately, while holding less firmly, the perishable.

III

THE UNSEEN IN CURRENCY OF HUMAN SOCIETY

THE unseen is the real in the world of human society. Not only is the earth and the fulness thereof under the reign of the Unseen, but also upon His shoulders is the government of all them that dwell therein. Human history proceeds as by the unfolding of ideas. Institutions of society are ideas taking visible forms. In the temporal flow of human events which we call history there are unseen forces that are the real and the eternal. History is not an accumulation of facts, nor a string of annals. No more than is science a current observation of a mass of facts without rational or connecting explanation. Human society presents a succession of envisaged ideas in a rich variety of manifestation.

An event is only defined as it becomes significant in the part it plays in some great idea. Mere items of change accurately noted and systematically classified are not knowledge. If the complex of history is not at bottom an ordered fabric, then our boasted knowledge of it is essentially ignorance. A current event when placed for review of

the historic interest has meaning only as it is related to the whole spiritual unity of affairs. The life of humanity is known bit by bit and is evaluated in sentiment, custom or law, but the ever impelling force for readjustment is the deeper demand of reason which either may speedily or must gradually, through big ideas, introduce newer or deeper sentiments, customs, laws. That attempt at the history of man in any period is superficial which features prominently mere dates as pegs on which to hang events. We scratch but the outer surface of human behaviors when we present in the name of history a juiceless calculus of dates and battles, a piecework of when and where.

Human history is not a department of natural history. Man is cause as well as object. Personality must be central in history. Carlyle insists that "History is biography writ large," and that "institutions are the lengthened shadows of great men." "Taken as a whole," says Eucken, "history is the elaboration of a realm of inwardness." Aristotle tells us that poetry when presenting the permanent inner life is truer than history which is merely a record of a series of facts. Thus Keats:

"What care though owl did fly
About the great Athenian Admiral's mast;
What care, though striding Alexander pass'd
The Indies with his Macedonian numbers?
Joliet leaning
Amid her window-flowers, sighing, weaving

Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow
Doth more avail than these?"

So Jesus, the monopolist of innerness:

"The Kingdom of God is within." "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own life."

The great expository idea around which this world is being made is the Kingdom of God. *God, the Invisible King*, is a final insight which Mr. Wells presents as a book title, and his *Outline of History* is true in so far as it gives the reader a perspective of the "footprints of the Almighty." If one could write proper history, he would merge all movements about the master idea of the Kingdom which God and his men are making out of the varied kingdoms of this world. It would require an international mind and more—the mind of God. God and they who can see the world from His lofty viewpoint have the perspective for this history of which we are all sharing, in the making. Our money and means, government and social institutions, in so far as they minister to this kingdom, are enduring and eternally worth while.

The Bible relates all its marvelous facts to the dominant idea of the reign of God. It bears the inspiration of this final viewpoint. The history is prophetic in the sense of being stamped with ethical and spiritual ends. The course of God in reveal-

ing Himself in the history of Israel moves on in the form of a narrative which interprets purposes. It is never a mere description which sticks its facts to the vast field of events like insects pinned to a field of wax. There are those who relate our human affairs of history in a rather mechanical manner; others, more acceptably, take a political point of view. Now it is quite the vogue to speak of the economic interpretation. Human motives and actions are certainly too complex for any one simple and single angle. The Kingdom of God embraces all lower levels and is comprehensive. We speak of sacred history, but the sacredness is the divine interpretation of the facts, certainly not the bare facts which indeed are often very secular in the Old Testament.

We must hold clearly to the belief that this is God's world. God's government rules and blesses all mankind throughout all time and place. His is an everlasting Kingdom and there is nothing hid in any place from His presence. American history written by the inspiring divine viewpoint of the Kingdom of God would be a marvelous Bible. It is so written above. We can sketch some of its outlines. The timeless laws of God and the supreme interpretations of Jesus are defining and shaping, commending and condemning our national life. Our Holy Bible is a cross section of God's big plan made definite in an elect people, and a limited area. But think you that God is with

Moses at the forefront of Israel's history, and not likewise with George Washington at the forefront of American national life? Think you, that God was with David uniting a divided people and not likewise with Abraham Lincoln in America's struggle for unity? Think you, that God was with Josiah and Hezekiah and not likewise with Roosevelt and Wilson? All secular history has a sacred setting—The Kingdom of God relates to Israel in the exodus from Egypt, and also to the Puritans in their voyage to America. History from the standpoint of God, who is on the inside of reality, must be read inside out. The surface inhabitant will shout, "Lo here, and, lo there." Christ will say, "Look within and in your very midst; you interpret the Kingdom in your heart and you touch it into expression in life's throng and press."

Lafcadio Hearn tells us of an heirloom found in an old Japanese family: "A pretty little box is set before you," he relates. "Opening it, you will see only a beautiful silk bag, closed with a silk running cord decked with tiny tassels. You open the bag and see within it another bag, of a different quality of silk, but very fine. Open that, and Lo! a third, which contains a fourth, which contains a fifth, which contains a sixth, which contains a seventh bag, which contains the strongest, roughest, hardest vessel of Chinese clay that you ever saw. Yet it is not only curious but precious. It may be more than a thousand years old." And this is

an adequate picture of the materialist's interpretation of history.

In this world-tabernacle there are bags within bags. Reality is wrapped in science, philosophy, art, history and other peelings. The inner Reality is not a lump of clay, but the precious Ancient of Days, whom the earth and heavens cannot contain. Unwrap the surfaces visible, place facts within body of facts and interpretations within interpretations; all are envelopes for the sacred shrine of the Inner Kingdom. The idea comes before the event. The Kingdom of observation says, attach a fact; the Kingdom of inner meanings says, plant an idea. The Pharisee seeks a sign, the Christian discerns the spirit. Spiritual facts are not on parade, cannot be placarded. Men organize, Jesus regenerates.

The march of ideas are ever becoming incarnate in the fulness of times. A great idea is always revolutionary. If the revolution is on the installment plan, it takes the form of an evolution. Christ and His gospel is always a challenge to the old world and an invitation to a new world. Our labor (or money, its symbolized measure) is never in vain in the Lord, when the Lord is served by it.

We take up a practical illustration of the workings and conflict of the inner and ideal as applied to the greatest issue of our day—the issue of War and Peace. A vast army is ordered out in Russia to fight; it may be to engage in battle with a for-

eign foe, or to put down oppressive revolters. They have power to obtain their rights. They are abused, underpaid, underfed; the slaves of autocracy. Their system is irrational. Whether under the Czarism, or Sovietism, they are legions to one. They have the very obvious physical strength. Is it not a daring presumption for one to impose on such majorities? Here they are with muscle and musket and majority, and one man steps out and orders them to their death. And they,—abused, underfed victims of tyranny, of course they will revolt? But, of course, they will do no such thing. There is a stronger power than the musket and muscle and majority. It is the unseen idea that works in the minds of the Russians. It is a traditional and conserving idea, or a new revolutionary idea, that enables a few officers and spokesmen of the idea to command the multitude. They will revolt when they are under the dominance of another idea. It may be supplied by a Tolstoi, or by another political philosophy, or by a deep religious reformation.

We prefer a better and world-significant illustration. There is the battle of ideas between the military and peace ideal. The military idea has large armies and navies as the physical expression. This, it is supposed, is the nation's final protection. Will there ever be a day when naked justice, declared through some tribunal composed of men of justice, will be sufficient without instruments of

force to secure world order and progress? Certainly if we cease to use advancing science and industry in the service of warfare, then we must assume in reality that right is might. Will this fact then perfect itself into practise? Will the peace idea ever become regnant? Men are ruled by ideas. Fundamentally, we have wars because we believe in war. Wars will cease when we believe in the power of organization and law. The opposite of war is not peace, with its contemptible philosophy of pacifism. We hate the mollycoddle pacifism that makes life and creature comfort an end in itself. The opposite of militarism, the militarism that America hates, is world organization in democracy and justice. The world, as yet, does not believe that principle. Will not the peace idea, as it becomes firmly rooted in world conscience, tend to limit armies just as certainly as the war idea has tended to build them?

Here, then, is the battle of ideas. It has to do with the unseen,—the militarist as an idealist. He believes in force, armies, power. The anti-militarist is an idealist. He believes in law, reason, justice.

Ideas, though quite at variance, must work organically. Even in the sharply contrasting ideas of war and peace it is quite inevitable that political wisdom will dictate defense measures, while promoting the spirit and organization of peace. Nations will have armies and navies for a while after

the world is generally convinced that they have served their day. The Prince of Peace will be quietly and effectively functioning in the tribunal of reason and conscience, while the ever-belated political agencies are with slow caution scrapping the instruments of war.

We have spoken suggestively and by way of illustration of one powerful unseen idea which is possessing the common mind of the world with increasing force. We agree with Victor Hugo that the strongest force in the world is an idea that has come to its day. The idea of world organization for peace has certainly come to its day and the many interests of human welfare will be increasingly mobilized about this idea.

Of course the more spiritual and inner the idea, the higher the development when it effects its expression. However any ruling and dominant conception that has controlled man in any way whatever, is a spiritual fact and force. The whole creation groans and travails in pain until the new arrives and the deeper and inner idea is born into the world. He is the historic Seer [See-er] who, noting the movements on the surface of things, senses the brooding spirit of unseen motives and ideas that rule the world.

There is a certain stupid attitude which is a perpetual obstacle to progress. It takes these forms in speech: " This always has been so, and it always will be so "; " You cannot change human

nature." On the contrary, one of the leading heresies of Christianity is a disbelief in God's progressive purposes. We do not speak of " progress " as a slogan. I share no idle confidence with those who look complacently to progress for the solution of all our ills. Progress is modality, not causality. He who trusts progress by way of a kind of ideal substitute for God is leaning on the hollow reed of an abstraction. In a God of progressive purposes we trust. The first Christian martyr, Stephen, made a long address to his reactionary opponents and the theme was distinctly a defense of God's progressive leadings in the history of Israel. Near the end of his speech, he announced his text: " Ye stiff-necked, ye have always refused the purposes of God." God is always contemporary. He is always saying to his prophets, speak unto the inert masses of men and organizations that they move forward. Human nature does change through the ages. It is the distinctive work of God's spirit to change our human nature, individually, and in whole sections of social customs. St. Augustine could say in his day that ancient virtues are modern vices. It is ever so.

The unseen forces are solidly effectual in changing human nature. A Roman Emperor once boasted that he gave eighty-nine gladiatorial exhibits in which ten thousand men fought, and twenty-six exhibits of conflicts with wild animals, in which thirty-five hundred African beasts were

slain. Once there entered the arena a human sacrifice of protest in the name of Christ and humanity. This act was a symbol of a new idea. Such exhibits are passed away. Once human sacrifices, even in the Old Testament, were mingled with religious ceremonies. It is so no more. Once heretics were burned at the stake, because they held different opinions than their *incendiaries*. As if truth can be extracted by force, and opinions determined by the torch! Once feudal lords on a fortified hill disposed with capricious will of the lives and property of those in the valley, without trial by jury or due process of law. World opinion today is organized in broader and finer justice. Once, in America, a true Christian went to New Orleans and witnessed an auction of a mulatto girl and was reported to have said, " Let's get away from here. If ever I have a chance to hit this damnable thing, I'll hit it hard." And Lincoln had his chance. And now, in leading governments, the sale of human beings in this form is no more. Once piracy was recognized on the sea and authorized by responsible governments. There arose a doughty-knight, the new nation called the United States, which refused tribute to the distant Barbary Coast pirates. And this form of highway robbery passed away.

Once, men were licensed by Christian governments to sell poison over a counter to its people. Just as once vested interests opposed pure food

legislation, so much more vested interests fought the elimination of the legalized sale of poison. But the public were learning that alcohol was a submarine cutting into the reason of men, ruthlessly wasting the best resources of the nation in the lives of men, women and children. Still it was not against human nature to abolish through constitutional amendments the legal sale of alcoholic liquors. This conquest of reason over appetite is struggling for its place in the world. It is a new idea coming to its day. We may well trust that some day, not only in America, but throughout the world, there may be an amendment to prophesy which reads: they shall beat their barley into bread and not into booze, and men shall not learn brewing.

Yes, unseen forces are potent. Human nature will yet change in striking ways. Doubtless there are many ideas, now nearly ripe for release, which will change the structure of our world and bring it closer to the invisible laws and principles of the Kingdom of God. Selfish individualism and competitive waste in the industrial world is being weighed in the balances. The half truth, that competition is the life of trade, is being supplemented by the other half truth, that competition is the death of trade. Coöperation, which is the industrial side of brotherhood, or the principle of brotherhood in application to the industrial world, is being built into the economic order in a most grati-

fying manner as a real working power. Science is more and more being perfected, the educational systems extended, the imperative obligation of the moral and religious life appreciated, and these all await the idea that has come to its day in whatever sphere of life the idea needs to pervade.

The currency of money or movements dedicated and directed to unseen realities can never be a mere form of worship; certainly not a mere scheme of man. It is solid and effectual worship and service. It cannot return unto God or man in empty vanity, but will accomplish that whereunto God hath designed.

IV

THE UNSEEN IN CURRENCY OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH

THE real Church is the Church invisible. The things which are unseen are the real things, in the definition of a church. Let Paul speak in fuller comment in this connection: "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." But there are diversities of gifts in the manifestation of the spirit. We may say, that there are varied denominations but one superscription. Therefore, "Some are apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers." In all there is one unified and spiritual aim, which is "The perfecting of the believers, the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ." There is one consummation devoutly to be wished—"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

"If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is

none of his." And, by certain inference, if he has the spirit of Christ, there is acceptance in the Head whatever may be his connectional setting in the body of the church. Mohammed's leading creed is, " Allah is Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet," which Carlyle tells us is a mixture of an eternal truth and an eternal error. The truth of God is eternal, the eternal error is that Mohammed or any other merely human being is exclusively His prophet. I believe in the Holy Catholic Church and the fellowship of believers. This includes the Roman Catholic, the Greek Catholic, the Anglo-Catholic, the Presbyterian Catholic, the Baptist Catholic, the Methodist Catholic, the Congregational Catholic, the Quaker Catholic, and many another member of this great body universal and unseen recognized as holy by the head of the Church in this sign: " If any have the spirit of Christ he is His." We place as prelude to the Church these words from Wordsworth's *Prelude:*

> *" There is one great society alone on earth:*
> *The noble living and the noble dead."*

I confess to a real thrill of devotion and loyalty in being a part and a member of this " great cloud of witnesses " in the Church of Christ unseen.

Only spiritual unity is unity. Only mind or consciousness can hold the underlying principle which is the unseen but connecting unity of apparently

seen opposites. One can think unity, but he cannot shape it with his hands. There is no unity in organization of things as such. In nature unity in variety is the first law. The variety is seen in things, the unity is unseen in thought. It is therefore that monotheism or the central truth of one God is reasonable. No uniformity nor all-sweeping organization will secure unity. The stripping-off of temporal and visible attributes will not give unity. Pantheism peals off the rich variety of manifestations and reduces God to an empty stare.

The great idea of organic unity in the Church must not be so denatured as to mean inorganic uniformity. Because of the real invisible Church we have the strength of Church institutions. A failure to see the invisible may give rise to many absurd notions about church unity, as though there could be no virtual unity without dissolution of visible historic institutions and their rebuilding about some common idea. A botanist can see the unity in the world of flora without blending the species. He can see the flower alike in the rose, the lily and the pansy which are different. The farmer can classify the common vegetable in the variety of cabbage and turnip and potato. Certainly, then, the spiritual man may see and say Christian with reference to varied individuals and institutions, if so be there is the control of the spirit of Christ. This is the invisible Church which has no brick, no

liturgy, no government, no creed except as these things are manifested in the varied churches or denominations.

There is but one Church, and every temporal expression of it, of whatever name, should bring its organization into conformity with this spiritual fact, "If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we *have* fellowship one with another." The Church *is* essentially the fellowship of believers, not the institution of believers. Denominationalism sins precisely at the point where offense is against the unity of the spirit. It carries no offense in objecting to the uniformity of organization. Certainly the unity of the spirit, both in logic and history, permits and even requires variety of organization and of function while at the same time the spiritual unity distinctly forbids the waste of duplication, overlapping and undercutting which is too prominent in our Protestant Christianity. We would aid the cause of real spiritual unity, if we think less of church unity and think more of Christian unity.

There is a certain literalism and verbalism frequently shown in the use of Christ's beautiful prayer "That they all may be one." This prayer cannot be brought down to a mechanical phrase without neglecting the full sentence which would make the thought clear: "As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they all may be one *in us*." This prayer is in a family circle, and to institu-

tionalize it is to lose its spiritual meaning. What father of you, having twelve children, would think of his earnest wish or prayer that they all may be one in the sense of putting them into the same room, or reciting the same formulas, or having the same professional career, or functioning in the same way in life. If you, then, somewhat foolish, can think wisely concerning spiritual harmony in variety of expression in your own little family, how much more shall the Father of all mankind rejoice in a spiritual unity of His fellowship of believers without the mechanical oneness of organization. Eldad and Medad brought their complaints to Moses that there was prophesying being done in the secular camp where chaffering and bargaining were carried on rather than in the assembly or the church. The great leader made answer, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets." The disciples, excited, come to Jesus saying, "Master, we saw one casting out demons and we forbad him," because, as the context indicates, it was not done in their way. "Forbid them not," says the Master. The essential Church is where two or three individuals or several hundreds of individuals in several different denominations are gathering together in the name of Jesus. As Leighton Parks so well says, "The unity is to be found in the atmosphere of God and in loyalty to Jesus Christ, and not in any ecclesiastical arrangement." And this invisible and real Church

is the solid basis and promise of the unity of the Church.

We have been making decided and definite strides toward the real and spiritual unity of the Church. The separation of Church and State is a boon for vital unity. The state tended toward uniformity in its control of the Church, and Scriptural church unity was defeated through a forced discipline and forced doctrine. Like all force, it becomes at the last divisive.

The Bible presents the Church invisible in beautiful figures of speech, symbols, and similes. These forms of speech are not drawn from the lower planes of visible and contemporary organizations. Jesus lived in a day when the Roman government, with its schemes and functions and departments, was splendidly organized. The armies were efficient in the technique of organization and Jesus often met the centurion and the captain and the commander. There was business organization. But when Jesus referred to His society of believers He thought of them as a family or a flock or as members of His unseen Kingdom. Clearly, then and now, the best basis for effective organization of all churches is the recognition in Christian freedom of the present spiritual unity of all churches.

We may ask, in modern query, as was suggested to Paul, what advantage then hath the Congregationalist, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Catholic? We answer, from the standpoint of the

exclusion of other bodies from the invisible Church and the saving grace of God: None! When Paul was preaching his majestic concept of the invisible Church of Christ, the jealous and exclusive contemporaries in Judaism to whom "The oracles of God" had been committed, flung this proposition with the weight of centuries of traditional prejudice: "What advantage then hath the Jew?" Paul's answer was clear. As a closed organization which excludes the Gentiles from the free and universal grace of God, none! There is an incident in the life of Jesus of clear meaning here. I plunge into the midst of it: "These things spake the parents, because the Jews had agreed already that if any confess that He is the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue; therefore, said the parents, He is of age, ask him." The man did confess and was put out of the synagogue. Jesus learned about it, and meeting him one day at the temple He calmed all his traditional fears and assured him that the act of the Jewish authorities was inconsequential. In this connection he made that beautiful and ever applicable statement, "I am the door of the sheep." This simply states that the entrance to God is spiritual and not institutional. Instead of the Jewish synagogue, Paul today would, in his defense of the Church invisible, accept any denomination which our traditional loyalty would choose. None can boast of an exclusive advantage. All are inclusive in a larger spiritual concept.

Christ is through all and in all, the door to God. Christ ever thinks essentially in terms of the invisible laws and favors of His Father's Kingdom, of which any church, every church and all churches are the privileged and unworthy instruments.

What advantage hath my church? The answer should also be that of Paul in reference to the Jews: "Much in every way." For each member visible of the great spiritual Church invisible has contributed its gift, its office. Nor have the churches the same offices, the same phase or emphasis, though they have the same testimony and are "severally members one of another." The advantage, then, is that each church bears some special form or aspect of the whole range of the gifts of the spirit.

There are many members, but one body; many manifestations, but one spirit. We are assuming, in an attempt at church unity, that there is a vast difference in doctrine between the churches. In fact the essential doctrines are quite common. The things which live through faith, the great invisible motives, the outstanding redemptive facts are common to Christians of good will the world over. The great difference between churches has to do with things that are seen, that are less essential and that are sometimes almost inconsequential: matters relating to government, polity, and ritual. Attempts are sometimes made to compromise positive convictions, doctrines, if you please, which

serve to reflect the experience of believers in Jesus, and this in the interest of unity. Such procedure makes for division. The Gospel is comprehensive and its vast range of freedom must be respected. But there is a Gospel, and such a Gospel, that it is not at any time commensurate with any simplified, easily intelligible, cultural statement which is sufficiently colorless for general agreement. I have often felt the utter futility of a basis of union of believers on any measurable, rationalistic and defined expression of the Gospel content. As in the state with its government and constitution, there are principles of faith and loyalty and spiritual appreciation which transcend the most valuable instruments of its organization, so certainly is such the case in the Church.

I want to subscribe to that article in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints!" "Holy," meaning dedicated or set apart to a big task, "catholic" meaning universal, the "saints" meaning believers. I believe in the great Church universal, dedicated to the establishment of the kingdom of God in the affairs of men, and constituted as a fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ.

Men need the Church today as never before. The Church gives peace and poise in the complexity of modern life and demands. The Church supplies motive force for wholesome living. The Church appointments are not one among many, but

it is the one appointment for the many. We are living in the confusing complexity of things and we need the sweet simplicity of some great fellowship. We live in embittering business competition, silly social rivalries, brutal extravagances, biting poverty, prodigality of pleasure which does not satisfy but often impoverishes. We live in the friendlessness of crowds, and receive too often the chilly handshake of avarice. We need no more of such things. We do not need to be further conformed to this manner in the world of things, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that all our duties may become divine commands, that the wall of the partition between the secular and the sacred may be broken down, and life may be lived nearer to the plan and purpose of our Maker.

We need religion. We want religion. We want the religion of Jesus, and the Church is the best depository of this religion. It is here that we cultivate the sense of worship, a sense of God's presence, the comfort of His love and the joy and strength of human fellowship in its highest terms.

We present two fundamental propositions which are irrefutable:

First: The Church is not an artificial contrivance, but a human necessity. It is grounded in the nature of things. Religion is a necessity. Living the life of a human being, the alternative is either a sane, ethical, broadening Christianity, or some species of superstition. In studying the life of

many of our so-called prominent skeptics, I have been impressed with the presence of superstition. Whenever I hear that a man denies God and the great claims of religion, I am not at all surprised to hear, also, that he is carrying a rabbit's foot in his vest pocket, or consulting an ouija-board. The religious instinct will out in some form. Christ came to give it a great and noble content. You may say that the Church is a Divine institution. It is, and that because it is grounded in the nature of man. Emerson once said, that God carried all His points in the universe in the making of a human soul. We were made to believe in God, freedom and immortality. Man is inevitably religious. He is religious by psychological necessity. He is, as some one once said, "hopelessly religious." Augustine speaks the thought of every soul when he cries out, "Oh, God, my soul was made for Thee; I can find no rest, until I find my rest in Thee." And we add, nor ought he find rest until he finds God. Religion, enlightened with the mind of Jesus, is the voice of the filial soul crying, "Abba, Father."

This human necessity is really the ground of the Church. Joseph Cook used to say that there are three testaments,—the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the oldest testament, and the oldest testament is the nature of things. The Church is founded on this oldest testament, and is therefore also grounded in the Old and the New Testaments.

It is not really careful language to say that Christ founded the Christian Church. It is not Biblical language. Christ built the Church. Let us bring this out in the famous setting, (Matthew 16: 13-10):

(1) Peter's confession is personal, clear, deep: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus' answer is:

"Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father."

(2) Jesus' confession: "Thou art Peter, and on this Rock will I build my Church"—my Ecclesia. The emphasis here is on the pronoun. The noun was familiar to His hearers. The gates of Hades will not prevail in the indestructible assembly of great believers.

"Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus,
Constant will remain;
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst that Church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
And that cannot fail!"

In Macaulay's essay on von Ranke's *History of the Popes,* is this famous statement in reference to the Catholic Church, which I would apply to the Church universal: "She saw the commencement of all the governments, and of all the ecclesiastical

establishments that now exist in this world; and we feel no assurance, that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot in Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine; when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch—when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigor when some traveler from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

The foundation of the Church is the soul's grasp of vital truth which is the truth of God. The assembly is a fundamental social instinct. Jesus builds on it with His truth. John Calvin in Geneva, John Huss in Bohemia, John Knox in Scotland, John Wesley in England,—these men built annexes on to the building of the Master-Builder. And if, through the ages, there be any other man "sent from God whose name is John," he, too, will build with true insight on this human instinct for organization and assembly, and each man's work shall be tried, of what sort it is. John Wesley saw the fault in that Aldersgate Street room,—something that was needed, and it has been vital enough to grow as a result. Wesley told others, and this testifying function measures the strength of the impact of the truth, and the result is a great Church. A church stands or falls with the vitality

and truthfulness of the message that is entrusted to it. Its organization is only a matter of course.

I have had my temptations to etherealize and make strong emphasis on the invisible Church, with something of indifference about the organized Church. We do the same thing in reference to our souls and bodies oft times, forgetting that there is a unity between form and spirit. But the nature of things sets us to rights again. We are incarnate. Institutions are incarnate. They are the index of life. Life is organization. Any truth or spirit is lonesome; going about in strange places and lonesome abstractions, it must seek a body. Take away organization from about a spirit and it may enter into another and bad organization, as the story of the spirits which went out of a man and preferred to enter the hogs rather than to exist in the air. The Church is the body of Christ. Throw a spark of life anywhere and it will form a body about itself if it remains alive very long. All organizations testify to the fact that the Church was grounded in a human necessity and not in an artificial contrivance. The Russian Bolsheviks have their Sunday-schools; the German Socialists have their assemblies. Scientific, philosophical and educational interests are institutionalized. Law and order do not exist as a spiritual abstraction. They have their system organized with courthouses. The spirit of healing is not sufficient in itself. It has its hospitals. Education is essentially a spirit-

ual thing, but it has schools, colleges, universities, and the taxpayer can testify to a considerable organization. Christianity is not something impractical and abstract. Its central doctrine is the incarnation by which God Almighty became flesh and dwelt among us, as the Word and the Revealer. The Church is the body of this Christ. Burn down all the churches and human nature in Jesus will rebuild them. Gates of destruction cannot prevail against an indestructible instinct, as long as it is in the interest of vital and eternal truth. After a world devastating war, during which and shortly after, a few superficial but earnest leaders predicted the failure and downfall of the Church, we may sing with truer meaning:

"Oh, where are kings and empires now,
Of old that went and came?
But, Lord, thy Church is praying yet,
A thousand years the same.

"We mark her goodly battlements,
And her foundations strong;
We hear within the solemn voice
Of her unending song.

"For not like kingdoms of the world,
The Holy Church, oh God!
Though earthquake shocks are threatening her,
And tempests are abroad.

"Unshaken as eternal hills,
Immovable she stands;
A mountain that shall fill the earth,
A house not made with hands."

My second proposition is, that truth, to be effective, must be put up in the first personal pronoun. Most men refuse to see or to believe a truth, especially a life truth, until it is lived out in a person. I hold the power of the press in highest regard; there is great need of trained journalists,—men of broad sympathy, of international scope of mind, who scorn to stir up passions which they have no power to allay; who hate jingoism; who cannot by any insidious process be bought. Some one has said, "Let me write the headlines of a nation, and I care not who writes their laws." The press will never be a substitute for the pulpit; nor will printing take the place of prophecy. The message of life in the gospel truth, I have no manner of doubt, will ever and increasingly be spread by the living voice in the foolishness of preaching. John the Baptist was a Voice, and no book could reproduce that vital message. He whom John announced was the Word; who spoke, as never man spake, the words of eternal life, as one having authority and not as the Scribes.

The prophet is ever needed. He is essentially a speaker. The word means "a speaker forth," and books of the prophets are best read as orations. Hosea, Joel, Amos, and successors; these are not books, they are men with a message to their own day; men who declare timeless truth in a timely way.

The preacher has the monopoly of innerness.

In the measure that he has the right to preach, he can say as none other, "I am this truth." President Wilson once made a remarkable address on the ministry, in which he stressed the point that the minister, in contrast to every other professional man, contributes largely in terms of being, rather than doing. In the ministry, truth is enfleshed. Of all dull reading, the sermon may be the dullest, —especially a good sermon. In the essay or the lecture a man is more or less outside of his subject. Not so in the sermon. God is love. This is the greatest truth ever uttered. I have often read it. I once heard it as the last words of a great and good soul, and it came to my heart afresh with a meaning that volumes could not give. There are the ministries of the Church to childhood,—the memory of truth with mother at home, and the minister back of the desk, and the teacher in Sunday-school. I am sorry for the man who has not the memory that makes a church sweet to him. Says John Randolph, the great statesman, "I would have been an atheist, if it had not been for the memory of the time when my mother took my little hand in hers, and taught me on my knees to say, 'Our Father, Who art in Heaven.'" God only knows the preserving power, for statesmanship and citizenship, of the Christian Church.

The church-service has more of spiritual culture than the word of the minister. There is the music, which is an essential part of the worship. Our

hymns and tunes feed the roots of life. The proper function of music is to minister to the sublime and the sacred. It often ministers to vice; but, so doing, it performs as a fallen angel. Hymns make us one; our creeds merge in the spirit of song. The catholicity of the real Church is revealed in the hymnbook. Come, let us join with sweet accord, as we sing with Newman, the Romanist, *Lead, Kindly Light;* with Ray Palmer, the Congregationalist, *My Faith Looks Up to Thee;* with Sir John Bowring, the Unitarian, *In the Cross of Christ I Glory;* with Charles Wesley, a Methodist, *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.* Who cares to remember that Phillips Brooks is an Episcopalian? That Gibbon and Ireland were Catholics? That Edward Everett Hale was a Unitarian? John R. Mott, a Methodist; Charles Parkhurst, a Presbyterian; Charles Spurgeon, a Baptist? The Church presents truth more safely because in forms of personal pronouns.

Our spiritual desires are inchoate and inclined to be unwholesome until we meet with others in the assembly. This is the nature of the Christian religion, where the brotherhood plays such a large part,—where religion is related to our fellowmen so intimately that we might expect to pay the penalty of loss of its richest meanings if we neglect the assembling of ourselves together. We are church members. We are membered in one body, and the Church is the embodiment of that fact. I need my

neighbors' faith; without it my own grows cold. "Come, we that love the Lord, and let *our* joys be known." "Let *us* pray." We need the touch of the crowd for true religion. "A true congregation is vastly more than an aggregation. Dr. Faunce suggests that a Christian communion or community is not a series of clocks in a jeweler's window, each with its own tick and time, in a busy individualism, but like clocks in modern office buildings, regulated by the central clock on the main floor.

V

THE UNSEEN IN THE CURRENCY OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

THE unseen is the real in personal faith and conduct. The Bible writers, in presenting their heroes of the faith, center their gaze on the invisible. Whatever visible facts crowd to the surface, the core of the matter is soundly real, and all else is shot through with God. The Bible, in interpreting history or biography, has the artistry which suggests more than it represents. Smallest items in event or action may suggest transcendent faith. Events and deeds are not surface incidents which can be accurately represented by the snapshot of a kodak, but they are meaningfull of suggestions which only can be truly featured by the brush of the artist.

There is Moses. "He endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Life is forever taking on some form of paradox. Commend me to this one, "Seeing Him who is invisible." A view of the unseen, —this is the secret of the Moses factor in civilization. Moses was in the midst of the bulk of things seen in Egypt; ponderous and impressive architecture, huge armies, pyramids over dead bodies,

swathed mummies, gods in animal forms. But Moses saw the invisible. His lot was cast in the midst of art, culture and state position, his faith was with the despised people of God. It was not that Moses failed to see the splendors, but he saw another splendor. Moses saw God. The lusty shouts of throats are reduced to a mere murmur at the voice of the Eternal, and the shine of gaudy toys grows dim in the vision of invisible beauty. Other historians mention the Hittites, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, in reference to Government and industry and custom. The Bible speaks of Moses and his faith. The record of the seen is transient; the record of the unseen is eternal.

There is Paul. To him, " The unseen is eternal." Note the connection in which Paul records this conviction. He speaks of a suffering, decaying, broken-down, seen, physical body, in inverse ratio being renewed day by day. There is the inner unseen man. Note the grand contrasts of which he is so fond in his style. Affliction, glory; the affliction is light, which seems to us so heavy. The glory is of a great weight, which seems to us to be as light as air. But the affliction is momentary; the weight of glory is eternal. And still more contrasting, the affliction but for the moment works out for us the glory in excess of conception. And then he reaches his climax; " While we look not to the things which are seen but to the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the

things which are not seen are eternal." Paul saw Christ. For him to live was Christ. He walked by faith and not by sight. He was under the domination of the unseen. *The Book of Acts* seems disappointing. The theme of *The Book of Acts* might be stated as the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, and yet there is not a word of interest about the great city,—its Temples, its armies, its fleet, its trade. But the greater fact is noted,—the prisoner Paul, and Paul's unseen ideal and faith have outlived Rome and will do so increasingly. Tacitus, Juvenal, Pliny have as little to say of the Christians as Luke says about Rome. To them the visible was all important. Rome's deepest force was not in its spectacular buildings, and parades and armies, but it was in the Maritime prison.

There are men today who are living on the surface of life in the temporal superficialities. Verily they have received their reward; whose motto is, Let us eat and be merry, and true enough, they die to that life qualitative which is Eternal. This is the outcome of the bondage to things, and all of us feel the tug of things against soul values, which makes it a pull to live the real life. We say too often, Seek first wealth, pleasure, success and the kingdom of heaven shall be added, and in that we, too, are superficial and not worthy of the great company of the faithful. The world—the lust of the eye—passeth, but he that doeth the will of God abideth.

The supreme need is spiritual vision. This age is exploiting its great deer forests, to make pulp; to make paper; to make books, magazines and scribble, which may make scatterbrains. Oh, for the man who can look through the scattered thought, the scribble, the paper, the pulp, back to the waving trees again! Look again at the original article, and see God. Are we so habituated to the pressure of the eternal Unseen, that we recognize not His presence?

The truly cultured man is he who wants to get a good look at the universe before he dies. True culture is the process of taking in the sights. Not the artificial shows of Coney Island; rather God's great theatre with arched dome of heaven above; the electric park in the sky of the mysterious twinkling stars; this kaleidoscopic blooming and dying animal and vegetable life all around; to see things and to see people, and above all to see the invisible. Many of us in the hurry after food and fabric which the average run seek because they need it, as the good Father knows, are afraid of the shop windows. We are afraid of being caught looking at a sunset. It is sentimentalism. In some quarters there is greater respect for the sentimentalism that looks into a sugar barrel or the strong box in the bank. We look not at people for fear we stare. One cannot see and stare. Only vacant eyes stare. This rush of life; we are tired when we come home from the crowds. The sight

is too much for heart and brain. This rush of human souls on legs! What a sight for the gods!

Above all, let us cultivate the presence of God. I speak not of the conventional religious activities. There is this very definite purpose further in what I have been saying. Men have sometimes supposed that Christ and salvation, the Church and Christian convictions, are invisible facts, peculiar facts, to be taken on a peculiar species of faith. Rather this fact of Christ is in line with all the real facts of life,—real because invisible. I want no less surety for my faith in Christ, than for my faith in the scientific and historical unseen. I have no less but rather more, and a worthier object of confidence; God, in Whom all else exists, and Christ, who shows us the Father. Of course God and Christ,—invisible realities, are very visible in their effects like all the real but invisible facts of life.

This, too, we say now: The proof and acceptance of Christ is for us essentially the same as the disciples of old, who saw Him in the flesh. I dare say it is more convincing today, through the power of the living, unseen spirit of God. If His words and His presence will not today win the response of my heart, would they, if I were with Him in the upper room? He is just as invisible to the believing soul, and just as visible as ever. The disciples were called to translate through the faith faculty, the visible into the invisible. We are called to do

the same thing in another day. Mr. Bascom says, to this point: "Those who can make the translation will believe in the Divine message; no matter to what genus they belong, and those who cannot make the transfer, share neither the vision nor the belief. Historic proof is nothing; and vision of senses is nothing, save as they are accompanied by the insight of the spirit into the spiritual message."

We need a critique of spirituality, after the manner and great significance of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* to define the elements and the limitation of the term. We have the clear standard in the mind of Christ. The spiritual man is peculiarly a man with a faith which works in the unseen and the real. He is a man in possession and under the dominance of the inner. He is governed by ideas and ideals. This is a broad statement, meant to be so, for it has to do with any one who is under the culture of the inner life; any one of vision or insight. Christian spirituality makes the unseen object to be Christ with His vast range of Personal Values and Kingdom interests.

The spiritual is the real; yet I feel challenged with a suspicion that spirituality is unreality. This impression comes not entirely from the sluggish and earth-bound mind, but often from those who are spiritual indeed. The word may be so ambiguous in popular usage that we prefer to use other terms to describe a strong Christian. Jesus' simple and universal concept of the spiritual life

is warped to serve some particular temperament. Spirituality is occasionally used not in the interest of character but to serve in some partial way, feeling generally having a prominent place.

To be spiritually-minded is life, and that the life of the whole man; emotional, intellectual, ethical; heart, head, conscience—what God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Spiritual must be attached to the warmth of discovery of any of God's laws, to a new insight into facts, to a new application of science to public welfare. It is not necessarily unspiritual when fervid piety is chilled by a new fact. Conscience needs often to supplement unction. A man once presented spirituality to me as some way a precious possession which if one has it he can well afford to have standards of action which even the so-called world may despise. It is not spiritual to emphasize the benefits of religion more than its responsibilities, or to fear too much stress being laid on morals, or to speak of the devotional type of mind as an antidote to the scientific type. God, when high and lifted up, fills the whole temple, and touches into meaning the outer courts. He knows a life divided who once said: "When I go into my oratory I forget my laboratory and when I go into my laboratory I forget my oratory." The distinction of sacred and secular is necessary in point of phase and emphasis but not in point of antithesis. If one is truly spiritual he is so in shop and street and science and sanctuary.

To the new creature all things are new. If to be spiritually-minded is life, it must be as broad as life, must be large enough to appeal to the universally human and not narrowed down to our own pet indulgences. Many men cannot feel the hollowness of the secular, nor should they. They should feel the fullness of meaning and responsibility in the handling of the secular by that renewal of their minds which transfigures the commonplace.

Personal religion is the basis of social and kingdom progress. Jesus' God must be in control in *my* life if His laws are to control in *our* life. How can we make the spiritual life real and attractive? What is spiritual? It is marked in popular ways by a certain atmosphere, a certain fervid vocabulary, a certain air of unworldliness, a certain emotional reaction. In the gospel there is a wholesome absence of this, there is a realism, a healthy mindedness, a "sweet reasonableness." The spiritual man has such qualities as wisdom, perspective, discipline, broad and open minded hospitality to the wide areas of interests and truth. The greatly spiritual man has a mystical sympathy which makes him restless in the confines of sect and faction. The spiritual mind is not a partial mind. The centrality of spirituality is in a pure heart, a clean conscience, and a lofty motive. He who has the mind of Christ does not detach from the common nor conform to it, but by a renewed mind he transforms it. He feels sure of God and is at peace

with Him. A religion which parades a gloom and despair will be spiritualized as it "washes its face and anoints its head." The essentials of the spiritual life will be made definitely clear in any fresh and earnest study of the Jesus of the Gospel.

Christ is the way to the life that is at home in the eternal because He is living truth and the true life. "If ye had known Me ye would have known the Father." Christ is God personified in the only meaningful way that we employ the word "person." He is truth visualized and vitalized. Philip one day says, "Show us the Father." Jesus replies: "Have I been so long time with you, yet hast thou not known me, Philip! He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." We speculate about the divinity of Jesus Christ, the early disciples who walked and talked and ate and fished with His humanity looked into His face and saw the Father. When they knew Him, they affirmed Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Saving truth is personal and I dare say that all truth is in a lonesome detached abstraction until it gets back to the personal in a bosom of God, its seat and source. We meet, now and then, a person whose writings or sayings are as live wires to the soul; they find us; they bind us with hooks of steel.

There are germ thoughts. Mark them well in your soul. They are *you*. Like the germ, they may be hard to define, but they are fresh and they live. Let them grow. Whether inborn, inherited,

inbreathed from the atmosphere of a place, give them a chance to issue into fruit. Do not plant these germinal thoughts in small house-plant vessels. Put them out into God's open. Give them a chance for universal application. Let them spread out and in, below and above, and let all the emissaries of heaven lodge in the branches thereof. Frst of all, the thought that bears fruit must lodge lively and take root. And when the soul seems a wilderness in its barrenness of purpose and affection, let there come into it a great germinal thought or principle, and it is a baptism from on high. It taps that wilderness into a well-spring which will slake eternal thirst. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. A big man was never made on little beliefs. And a big belief was never merely theoretical. The living opportunity is not to get stuff, to cram details, to mass material. This is somewhat necessary as a soil for ideas. But the greatest value of a Christian culture is the undergirding of big ideas and the presence in the soul of impelling impulses and ruling passions. Get the truth vitalized and the organized expression will take large care of itself.

A living germ impulse in life work is needed imperatively. The heroic dulls too often by acquaintance. We lose the youthful fire which burned in admiration for a Livingstone, a William of Orange or an Abraham Lincoln. We take the past and the present noble living as a matter of fact rather than

that which should appeal to us, with a worshipful reverence. A hero or a saint, we analyze, and say: "That's his kind." Over a great hero's grave we botanize to gratify a cold, passing scientific interest, rather than pray for the Eternal power to follow in his train. We lost decidedly when we gave up in our educational program *The Book of Martyrs*. This book needs to be restored with the new martyrs added. May I submit you to this final examination here and now—final in course and in cause? Do you experience a spiritual reaction to fine things thought and done in this world which comes from an intimate and sympathetic appreciation? Then, so, you pass the test of vitalized truth. Do you read that a noble soul or his cause has fallen, and skip over it like the social column, or a weather report? Then you have not yet passed the vital point in the truth test. Mere information contact with things will not start the fire in the soul. There must be moral contact. "How many of us know any brave, self-denying, inspiring work with such interest that we should miss it out of our lives, if it should fail? Are we not conscious that we are living, for the most part, in the moral commonplace, when the world is full of moral quickenings for us, if we knew how to come under their power."

Note how a proposition becomes personal; truth, life. Thomas asks the way to heaven's mansioned resources—the how and the whither of such a fact.

He no doubt expected, in answer, some program, or formula, or law rather than grace and truth indeed. Pharisaism dies hard. There is much modern Pharisaism; wherever form is placed for force, program for power, method for the methodist, effect for cause. Pharisaism is in all ages the vice of being preposterous, of placing cart before the horse. It is the rotten spot at the core of an otherwise commendable attempt at a philosophy of government called Socialism, which is interpreted as the seeking things and assuming that the Kingdom shall be added. It is a canker of offense in every attempt to substitute the reforming agencies of mere education or political machinery for the redeeming power of religion. Jesus' answer is striking. It is not in the form of speech, but in the form of a speaker. The way of life is a life. This is of prime importance for every seeker to know. He who finds you, loves you, makes you, redeems you; He is your truth. Books are written, advice given, precepts enjoined, but they only become germinal and fruitful as they are infused and informed with life.

Let me illustrate: Confucianism is a vast system. Confucius wrote but a few words, which he called "The Great Learning," and here it is in considerable part: "The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the empire, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families.

Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts." How true this in reason and precept! Christ might have used the same words with power. Out of the heart are the issues of life. However, the fine system of Confucian ethics hangs like icicles without the first warmth of the touch of blood. Who rectifies the heart? Those statements are good propositions, and true, but they are not Christian truth, though Christianity may use exactly the same words. They are not germinal, not pregnant, not vital. They lack the Christ, the indwelling truth. I think we are sorely in need, today, of a world apologetic, but the world's imperative need always is a Saviour.

We do not so much need to know the way, as we need motive power to travel on the way we do know. Christ is the way, because He is the living truth, which is going-power to take the way. Believe me, very few persons have failed of worthy success in life through lack of intellectual equipment, but they fail almost invariably through lack of moral purpose. The formularies are as the banks of the river, which are ever necessary and which mark the flow and change with the centuries. Truth is the living water. Nor do we discount the banks as containers and constrainers of the flow—nor moan when in strong flow the bank breaks or the course meanders. The little systems which

have their day and cease to be, are the broken lights of God who is more than all the systems. The creeds, ever necessary answers to the questioning intellect, are as the changing body which has its birth, development and vicissitude in time. They are but handy reference for the life of the spirit whose interest and meaning is proportioned to eternal mansions.

It is not often that a great truth comes to one, germinates, takes root, grows; that is, not often that it becomes *you*. A really great thought is an agent; you do not get it; rather it gets you. There are various occasions; there is the book read, the conversation with a friend, a sermon, a chance word, a stray suggestion like a treasure turned up unlooked for by the plowshare, a reflection that cannot form itself into an expression.

" . . . there's a sunset touch,
A fancy from a flower bell, some one's death,
A chorus ending from Euripides,—
And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
As old and new at once as Nature's self,
To rap and knock, and enter in our soul. . . ."

Watch these times, they are red letter days, are rebirths, when truth leaps in the bosom, when I believe becomes I am; then there is vital truth.

The touch of life may come to one in a wrestle with a temptation. It may come in the tussle of a decision, or come in the growing-pains which ad-

just and readjust education to life, ideal to real. On such occasions often the old man is ushered out and he becomes another. Jacob wrestles with the man until he prevails and Jacob is now Israel, having power with God and man; and the place that marks the conflict is a Peniel, for the experience unveils the face of God. So, too, you. Victory won for virtue or right really remakes one and might very properly rename one. Each sin overcome, each victory won, changes our nature. This is not theoretical, but vital. Our names might as well be changed, for we are another than the old self; the virtue of that victory takes the form of the first personal pronoun. Life's greatest tragedy is the moment that records between the cradle and the grave—the death of an ideal. Certain Indians held the belief that when an enemy is killed the soul of that enemy enters into the other who slays him as added virtue and strength. We eat the brains to get the intellect; we drink the blood to get the life; we eat the heart to get the valor. This philosophy is as near to vital fact as it is ever likely to come, when the victory is in a moral rather than an immoral fight.

We speak of backbone and talk as though it were a figure of speech. It is real. I am forced to believe that the ganglia lined up on the backbone are in a better formation for taking the aggressive toward the goal of life because and whenever set after a victory won. The temptation routed from

its entrenchment gives to virtue the trenches which evil once held.

"No, when the fight begins within himself
A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head,
Satan looks up between his feet—both tug—
He's left, himself, i' the middle; the soul wakes and grows."

The touch of life may come in a new vision of Christ. A Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of a new-found faith, is arrested in his mad course by the living Christ, and now it is no longer he that lives, but Christ dwelling in him. The light of the eternal enters. The new germ is planted. The whole mental machinery of a gifted personality is rekindled and Saul becomes a Paul.

Richard Watson Gilder, in his *Credo,* says:

"How easily my neighbor chants his creed,
Kneeling beside me in the House of God,
His 'I believe' he chants, and 'I believe,'
With cheerful iteration and consent."

But a spark of life touches this *Credo* when it enters the soul of Gilder with "faith deepening with the weight and woe of years," and he offers this prayer:

"Lead me, yea, lead me deeper into life,
This suffering, human life, wherein Thou liv'st

And breathest still, and hold's Thy way divine,
'Tis here, O pitying Christ, where Thee I seek,
Here where the strife is fiercest; where the sun
Beats down upon the highway thronged with men,
And in the raging mart. O! deeper lead my
Soul into the living world of Souls
Where Thou dost move.

"But lead me, Man Divine,
Where'er Thou will'st, only that I may find
At the long journey's end Thy image there,
And grow more like to it."

The vitalizing of truth may take a more general application and thought may strike home to the soul and fan the sparks of genius. A Malebranche is dull and purposeless . . . no truth seemed to kindle in him. The University at Paris never found him; he didn't appear there. Like a few others of genius in school, Malebranche got, in a routine way, the studies, but the studies did not get Malebranche. His soul was wood, hay, stubble, and for that very reason it was imperative that a live coal from off the altar should fall into such equipment. And elsewhere, too, there is his type. Here is a young man of college culture, a somewhat finished product, understanding with a fairly good analysis the elements of a Christian civilization, but more-or-less dead to vital truth. He knows the wanderings of one Æneas, but he is indifferent to the wanderings of his own heart. It is the pe-

culiar property of Christian education that it designs to vitalize truth.

Malebranche one day chanced to stop at a book stall and read a few lines from Descartes. He was riveted; he was lost; he was possessed. "Possessed," that is the word. He was possessed by the truth. He was possessed by the truth more truly than ever was a man possessed by the evil one. It was a truth whose expression could be placed in a telegram and have four words to spare for a minimum charge. "We see all things in God." This truth was personified. It tingles in his nerves, it flowed in his blood, it brought color to his pale scholastic face. Here he at last found himself. It was a book on dry Philosophy, but it was fire to stubble and there was flame. Malebranche found a germ of thought. Not many have read Malebranche, but he has read his soul into many. We speak of things as dry and dull; philosophy, mathematics, language, literature, society, government, church, school, home.—Knowest thou not, that wherein thou judgest God's reality thou judgest thyself. In fact, all truth of all kind is intrinsically undry and undull for its seat is the freshening bosom of God and man.—To a withered soul all is dry.

We speak not in slight about books. Literature is potted man. Therefore let books be reduced back to man-stuff. Let the book you read find you. There is much more type than print in the world.

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day by day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth knowledge." If truth comes through books, let the books find you. The appeal will be different for different persons. Sometimes a most worthy book serves its day, having lost its appeal in the newer generation. I do not recommend books as I used to. It is too much like recommending suites of clothes at a fire sale; better try them on. Take, for example, *Serious Call to a Holy and Devoted Life,* by William Law. It had the power to pierce into the soul and draw blood. Dr. Johnson said that the reading of this book at Oxford was the first occasion of his thinking in earnest on religion. Gibbon said of the author: "If he finds a spark of piety on the reader's mind, he will soon kindle it to a flame." John Newton said the *Serious Call* was the seed of Methodism. A group of young men at college, of whom were Whitfield and Wesley, read *Of the Imitation of Christ,* by Thomas a Kempis, Law's *Serious Call,* Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying.* These books have all pretty much lost their appeal. The only book which through all time keeps a fresh appeal and gives vital touch is the Book of Life—the Bible. But each generation has its books that appeal. . . . I will not advise or mention any. Find some truth that will speak home to *you.* Every author has his germ thoughts that permeate his words though they form no defi-

nite creed. They are the true *profession of faith.* Carlyle will tell you in all his many writings: Work hard. Be sincere. Be genuine. Down with all shams. Emerson writes on a great variety of themes, scattering his gems with inconsistent confusion. But through all there is the clear message: Be true to yourself. Read your Bible correctly and there is history, prophesy, parable, fiction, narrative—much variety, and we read in this book, too: " these things were written that ye might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that believing ye might have life in his name."

And this is fundamental. Do the words go through us and set us on fire, not with a sputtering sentiment, but a deep warmth of conviction. This is the Christian way, because it is Truth and Life, or rather it is vital truth. Mark again the expression, the words were written—" that believing ye might have life." . . . Is not this suggestive? " The words that I speak unto you . . . they are life." There are too many dead languages spoken. The principal one is English. " The English language is dead in so far as it is the medium of a strange or alien experience." So akin was truth to life in the Great Way that He made no reference to the truth He spoke, but rather, " I am Truth." Truth is absolute sincerity. All great souls know this and preach it; Plato, Emerson, Carlyle, Ruskin, as well as the Son of Man. This may not, though, be read out of others. It is the soul's own

loyalty to its own best. Do you care for advice? Keep a journal, it may be the honestest, freshest and best thing you write. Sincerity means to exemplify truth in life. This is very hard. We pretend so much unconsciously. Emerson may not be far from the fact when he says: "Set ten men to write their Journal for one day, and nine of them will leave out their thought or proper result, that is, their net experience, and lose themselves in misreporting the supposed experience of other people." How often one waits for the clue to say the expected thing instead of the honestly thought thing. A student sometimes wants the clue of the teacher before he answers, as though there was truth in the nod of the head. Too often this course is pursued in parlor conversation and in Church examination. It is even possible to be untrue at heart in a red-faced advocacy of the truth.

We readily grant Christ, the I-am-ness of Truth, because He is absolutely sincere. In Him there is no breach between theory and practice. He incarnates the message. He is the word. He can say a commonplace and make it full of God. It takes a real artist to say a simple thing. Fools trifle with obscure truth. In the rich piercing conversations of Christ the bond of connection was never snapped by any trick in utterance or thing done merely for effect. His were indeed heart to heart talks. We sometimes label ours as such, but we have not heart for them. Christ's message is Himself, a living

truth, and true life. Note the counsel of Christ. Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay. This is not teaching brevity, simplicity, or unadorned speech, that were to miss the point. Say what you mean and let there be a true ring. The flippancies and conceits of much unbelief ought, to the earnest soul, to be proof sufficient against it all.

President Tucker's remark on an education fits our message exactly. " An education is to hear the rising bell in the dormitory of the soul." Mr. McKenzie, when a young man, after his conversion became very much interested in the memoirs of two Chinese missionaries. There was a lively germ truth planted in his heart. It took on personal terms, for it was vital truth. It called for decision. It awakened desire. One night he confided to a friend his wish. His friend's reply was, to McKenzie, the voice of God; it was Truth incarnate, " You are still very young. Would it not be well to go in for the study of medicine and in course of time go out to China as a medical missionary? " The fame and good works of Dr. McKenzie are still known. The truth of the world's need is commonplace, and no truth at all, until you and I some way get vitally connected with it. The ruinous fact is that we speak of divine truth in the neuter gender. It will never work that way; an It, however decorated with titles and backed up by institutions, can not get things accomplished. There is no program for social reform, no scheme for the victims of poverty

and vice which can be abstracted from personal needs and somebody's personal supply. The charity that is not clanging brass, or tinkling cymbal, which suffereth long and is kind, can not wear kid gloves, there must be warmth in the touch. If one is to have abstract truth take root, he must live it and die it. Equality and liberty are beautiful abstractions, but Thaddeus Stevens, a lawyer to whom the professional was personal, wrote his own epitaph as follows: "I repose in this quiet and secluded spot, not from any natural preference for solitude, but finding other cemeteries limited as to race by charter rules, I have chosen this that I might illustrate in my death the principles which I advocated through a long life, the equality of man before his Creator."

Many a time in the mount of some life's experience, God warms the heart with vital truth which stirs desire and calls for decision. See to it, then, that you do not bank the life coal with your dry ashes and defer decision. Let vital truth take root.

"Belief's fire, once in us,
Makes of all else mere stuff to show itself,
We penetrate our life with such a glow
As fire lends wood and iron.
But paint a fire, it will not therefore burn."

VI

STEWARDSHIP OF THE UNSEEN

"MY son, give me thy heart." This is the supreme gift. In fact, it is the only gift. The heart directs the hand which holds the purse-strings. A strong affection works wonders in unclasping pocketbooks. A nation will unload billions under the passion of patriotism. When the love of Christ possesses the Church in a real way, our eyes will rejoice to see the deepening and extending of the Kingdom. Zeal, interest, heart, in a person or a cause commands the means to support the same. The newest and truest and most Christian doctrine of money is to personify it by way of Stewardship. Money is concrete life, it is bottled man, it is a token of service. Money is a handy and measurable reference for food and clothing and housing and educating and Christianizing. The most tangible things are means to spiritual values, which things never can be divorced from the spiritual in the unity of life. There is an economic basis for religion. "Give us this day our daily bread" is the manner after which our Lord has taught us to pray.

Man lives by bread, though not by bread alone,

if he really lives. Dollars and other financial currency are alike units of human labor when used to build roads and when used by preachers and teachers and their organizations furthering the Way of Life. Both should be spiritually interpreted. Jesus came that we might have Life—His kind of Life—and have it more abundantly. We can easily appreciate the relation of economics and religion, if we consider this proposition: it makes small difference in terms of the abounding life whether I receive five thousand dollars or seven thousand dollars a year, but it may make a great difference in values of the real life to a family whether the earner receives fifteen hundred dollars or two thousand dollars—a difference in food, clothing, books, recreation and socialized activities and Church privileges, all of which minister vitally to life, as Jesus would have it.

We often think of money as cold and mechanical. We sometimes wish we could live without it; we weary of it. What an idol we sometimes make of it! Everywhere we see exhibits which melt gold into calves, worshipping them. But money is distinctly a medium of exchange, and the exchanges of values must ultimately touch the final value of Life. The benevolent mind works in the present order for profit but he does not work for profit alone. Industry is being more and more professionalized, rather Christianized, with the motive of service. Even today most of the best work of the

world is done not from the gain motive. Money talks. It certainly does, but a Christian's conversation is pitched high. Money should talk in the right way. God, if I understand the New Testament, gauges a man by the way he spends his money, more than by the profession he makes in prayer-meeting. Of course, the fruits of the body cannot atone for the sins of the soul, but of course, also, a good soul will bring forth fruits worthy of his profession.

That was a strikingly practical statement of Jesus: "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also." Men will follow up their investments with interest and heart. Putting stock in the Kingdom is a strong stimulus to watching and aiding its development. An essential part of the Christian program is to direct the budget—the whole budget. Let Christ proportion the world's budget and He will in fact be remaking its civilization, for where the treasure is, there is the life interest. Luxuries, Parisian gowns, chewing gum, wines, military equipments: shirtwaists, bread, roads, schools, churches—a review of this cold array of figures in expenditure will reveal with fair accuracy, where and how we are living. To be sure, the reverse is true: where the heart is, there shall the treasure be. The safest and most satisfactory investment comes after we have learned its intrinsic value. The promoters of the will of God have a Gibraltar rock which abideth forever in its

enriching values. But it takes a deep minded steward of the riches of Christ to appreciate this. The Church everywhere is beginning to see that the best way to sustain missions is to promote the study of missions. Christianity must have its attractive prospectus and zealous sales agents. A knowledge gained from the study of mission literature and the great lives of the mission field, a knowledge of the great accomplishments of faith, should accompany always the appeal for support. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these *things* shall be added."

Jesus was not concerned with the philosophy of wealth or a definition of property. To Him this was God's world altogether and should, therefore, be altogether God's. There are two levels for viewpoint and the lower economic level can only be seen in right perspective from the higher spiritual level. Property is for uses of man, not man for the uses of property. Human values transcend property values and also do not contradict them. While "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," ye may serve, must serve, God with mammon. There can be but one loyalty. Not that there is any antagonism between gain and godliness, but rather the heart's fundamental allegiance cannot be divided. In becoming a Christian, a business man does not lay down his ledger, and the laborer his shovel and begin to pray. This would be an awful breach

between the sacred and the secular. Christian normalcy admits no split personality. A part of our prayer is, that each pick up his tools with a new zeal for a new and more comprehensive service with a newly found Master of all. For one is your Master and ye cannot serve two Masters. The mammon stuff infuses with a new motive. The heart is Christ's and so are the possessions; for we cannot be separated from our possessions. The true gift is self.

At the cost of repetition, we want to make clear that all offering is one in essential nature. Gifts of all kinds are life. Money represents life. Jesus in the New Testament makes this clear. Money is viewed from the spiritual point of view; its bearing on character. Therefore, the precepts and parables of warning on the misuse of wealth and the dangers which flow from the spirit of covetousness. Christ taught the spiritual poverty of undedicated possessions. Miserliness is in the soul and here is its root of sadness. Christ teaches us the transmutation of values. Here are His equivalents, plus: money into manhood, silver into soul, lucre into life. The tragedy of stinginess is in the cheapening of life. There is a surprising emphasis in the Bible on the subjective factors of giving—the good to the giver, apart from or in addition to the good bestowed. On the other hand, it is the objective cause which defines the spiritual quality of the gift; just as it is the apple, orange or pear, as object which defines

the quality of the taste. The bestowal of all my goods to feed the poor or the giving of my body to be burned is profitless without love; but the bestowal of the body and the goods which the body produces, in a Christian way is not at all likely without the love of Christ.

Giving makes for life enlargement. Stewardship is "God's school for raising men, not man's scheme for raising money." He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith in these words:

"How hard it is for them that have their trust in riches to enter the Kingdom of God.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

"It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

"He that giveth, let him do it with liberality.

"He sat down over against the treasury and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury.

"Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store as he may prosper.

"Render the account of thy stewardship."

And there are still those who hear all these things which the Spirit is saying unto the churches, and scoff at Jesus, for that they are "lovers of money."

The varied kinds of poverty in goods or in Good (some way related) we have with us always. But a generous and devoted heart is the abiding boon of Christ's endorsement. What is sadder than an

ingrown, dried up, emaciated *soul;* the soul whose miserable aims end in self, and by saving and spending his money on mere self is losing his life. The liberal man is literally a free man; the Christian philanthropist is free indeed. By this we mean that he is truly liberated in the powers and expressions of his soul. The closed mind and the constricted sympathies are no less lonely and belittling than the unopened hand. The liberal man releases forces enriching the developing life. One moves out into the enlarging circles as he loses to save himself. He is always as big as his biggest controlling motive. The all inclusive expository idea is the Kingdom of God. A single man is more of a man as he saves to spend for wife and children. His family with him are made richer as they are contributing to the " beloved community." He is of Christian proportions as he extends the circle to world relations, going into all the world of creatures and into the world of all creaturely needs. " God so loved the world that He gave. . . ."

Jesus related money to manhood. To Jesus, money, like the world of material things about Him of which in much part it is medium of exchange, was not merely mechanical. It had vast human significance and He so dealt with it. He connects everything with personal values. Jesus saw just such social conditions as we see today and in worse form. There was the proud, boastful wealthy class; there was the exploited poor class; there was

the slave class. Note His tone. He never railed at social conditions in the accents of an agitator. His thought never took the form of the classes and the masses; rather the good and the bad. The line of cleavage with Jesus was not on the surface of things visible and passing, but in the depths of things invisible and eternal. The abundance of things or lack of abundance of things must line up to the requirements of a man's life. His remarks relative to wealth were not of the nature of invective or disappointment, but of warning against moral consequences and with regard to the privilege of possession. He had no gall of bitterness in viewing the brutal extravagance and selfish indulgence about Him, though He was decidedly of the proletariat. He knew no class distinctions. His friends in the Spirit were such as Peter the householder, Matthew the tax collector, Zacchæus the well-to-do, Nicodemus the ruler, and Simeon the zealot. Jesus stood over against the treasury and He classified the rich poor widow in contrast to the poor rich Pharisees. When the heart is tainted, everything bargained and handled may be—groceries, life insurance, railway stock or salary for teacher or preacher. To earn his money honestly and profitably and to distribute it justly and charitably,—this is the whole financial duty of the Christian.

We often think that religion is pretty much a matter of taking up a collection. This is killing.

Old methods lend themselves to such a conception. The worship of the offering is in fact a deposit of life and for the life of the world.

There is a subtle tendency for one to congratulate himself that the heart is right, and he withholds the gift—a spiritual charity but not a financial one, whatever this may mean. Gifts without charity may have the merit to induce charity, but charity without gifts is empty. Paul's famous pæan in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians cannot be dedicated strictly to love or to charity. So close is one to the other that the translators find either term appropriate in the glorious connection. There is the honest value received in our church offerings. A business man has said: "There is only that religion in your paying of the pew rent which there is in your paying the grocery bill or subscription for the daily paper." This is too exacting and measurable for the blessedness of giving. It is our privilege to get abundantly more than we give. If this does not appear in the home affairs of the Church, it certainly will when we turn to the benevolence portion in the duplex envelope. Sharing the mind of Jesus, we get abundantly more as well as other than strictly value received. The only money I have certainly never lost, never can lose, is that which I have wisely given to Christ's Kingdom and in His name. We do not begin to pay society for its benefits. We get more than value received. Even in the tax budget of the

average man, there is clearly more value received than there is in his budget of personal indulgence. What would we be willing to pay for schools, streets, police protection, public utilities and varied protective agencies? Our voluntary offerings for God and the Church ought to be seen in the rewards which are suggested in the principle that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

A gift should be a worthy testimony. Money talks. The giving of the fruits of our body is an act of self-dedication. It is an act of worship and should be lifted above the elements of legal requirements. The new motives are finding newer methods. The Church has a glorious mission and need not apologize with business methods not solid. The old systems of church financing were often capricious and undirected. Men might have wondered " whether the bell in the steeple was ringing for service or for an auction," and to many people churches " seem to live not only on the taking up of a collection, but seem to live for the taking up of a collection." A ball glossed with a charity motive is generally a travesty with its costly personal expenditures and its inconsequential pittance to charity. Church suppers are more sacramental than sacrificial, and are a boon in point of friendly fellowship. Rummage sales are justified on the ground of salvaging waste which is a species of salvation (Jehovah is ever redeeming junk), but

for income they are but incidental. Money and energy expended in elaborate preparation should have more definite purposes than can be prescribed by a small margin of profit. Churches rich in the gospel of stewardship will never need poverty socials nor permit an occasional half dollar dropped in the collection plate to cover a multitude of imaginary " calls."

The steward worthy of handling the things of God cultivates the will to give; he acquires a taste for good causes; he consults conscience more than inclination in giving. Some one has suggested that systematic giving is good, methodical and proportional giving is better, but adequate and righteous giving is best.

Only in stewardship will God's causes get sufficient support,—Stewardship in acquiring, in saving and in spending. This means a new spiritual life in the Church.

Luther's revival in the sixteenth century gave us justification by faith; but faith without works is dead. The Puritan revival in the seventeenth century gave us a view of God's sovereignty; but this sovereignty must touch not only us, but our own possessions. The Wesleyan revival in the eighteenth century featured the power of the Holy Spirit to sanctify; but in the first and every community, the Spirit is interested in some form of distribution of goods. The revivals of Finney, Moody and others in the nineteenth century emphasized God's

free grace; but God's free grace is carried on the wings of man's free will offerings.

The twentieth century is polarizing religiously about a spiritual conception of stewardship, though it may not be so termed.

Horace Bushnell, one of America's great spiritual voices, spoke almost in the wilderness these words in his day: "One more revival, only one more is needed, the revival of Christian Stewardship, the consecration of the money power to God. When that revival comes, the Kingdom of God will come in a day." Gladstone once said: "I believe that the diffusion of the principle and practise of systematic benevolence will prove the moral specific of our age."

THE END

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